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Firefighters Graduate Call/Volunteer Firefighter Training Program

State Fire Marshal Stephen D. Coan and Massachusetts Firefighting Academy (MFA) Deputy Director Richard Farrar presented certificates of completion to members of the *Call/Volunteer Firefighter Training* class #14 in a graduation ceremony at 7:30 p.m. this evening. The recruit graduation took place at the Mahaiwe Theatre, 14 Castle Street, Great Barrington, MA.

The *Call/Volunteer Firefighter Training* program is unique in that it delivers a standard recruit training curriculum, meeting national standards, on nights and weekends to accommodate the schedule of firefighters in suburban and rural areas. Bringing the training closer to the firefighters often means more firefighters can participate. This program was held at the Great Barrington Fire Department. The Fire Chiefs' Association of Massachusetts persuaded the Legislature to financially support this innovative delivery of off-site training.

The twenty-two graduates, twenty men and two women, represent the ten fire departments of: Alford, Cheshire, Egremont, Great Barrington, Monterey, New Marlborough, Richmond, Sheffield, Tyringham, and Wilbraham.

Today's Fire Department Does Much More than Fight Fires

Today's firefighters do far more than fight fires. They are the first ones called to respond to chemical and environmental emergencies ranging from the suspected presence of carbon monoxide to a gas leak. They may be called to rescue a child who has fallen through the ice or who has locked himself in a bathroom. They rescue people from stalled elevators and those who are trapped in vehicle accidents. They test and maintain their equipment, ranging from self-contained breathing apparatus to hydrants, hoses, power tools, and apparatus.

In this Massachusetts Firefighting Academy program, they learn all these skills and more from certified fire instructors who are also experienced firefighters. Students learn all the basic skills they need to respond to fires and to contain and control them. They are also

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given training in public fire education, incident command, hazardous material incident mitigation, flammable liquids, self-contained breathing apparatus, stress management, water rescue procedures, confined space rescue techniques, and rappelling. The intensive program includes classroom instruction, physical fitness training, firefighter skills training and live firefighting practice. Graduates have completed 180 hours of training on nights and weekends.

Basic Firefighter Skills

Students receive classroom training in all basic firefighter skills. They practice first under non-fire conditions and then during controlled fire conditions. To graduate, students must demonstrate proficiency in life safety, search and rescue, ladder operations, water supply, pump operation, and fire attack. Fire attack operations range from mailbox fires to multiple-floor or multiple room structural fires. Upon successful completion of the *Call/Volunteer Firefighter Training* program, these firefighters are now be eligible to take an examination for certification to the level of Firefighter I or II by the Massachusetts Fire Training Council.